

Foreword to the KEM Special Issue Covered by the Advanced Functional Materials Session 2014

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The term '*Materials*' is very inclusive and includes almost every thing of physical products. '*Advanced Functional Materials*' is the further development but with the emphasis on advanced and functional materials. From a broad spectrum, the field of advanced functional materials includes all materials that represent advances and new functions over the traditional materials that have been used for hundreds of years. With the great mind of our time, the advanced functional material forum was originally proposed by the Chinese Advanced Materials Society in 2012 and eventually implemented by the Society of Molecular Imprinting as a specified session under the framework of the MIP conference. The publication of this special issue in ***Key Engineering Materials*** represents a commemoration to this specified session, hosted by Jiangsu University, Zhenjiang, China, during 18-21 Sept 2014.

As the executive chair, I am greatly delighted to help organize this session. The scientific program in this session has involved 170-plus participants, 45 full manuscripts and 62 abstracts from across the world. World-renowned scientists including Prof. Sergey A Piletsky (University of Leicester, UK), Prof. Klaus Mosbach (University of Lund, Sweden) and Prof. Karsten Haupt (Compiègne University of Technology, France) have delivered keynote lectures in this session. The Wanfang Data and the China National Knowledge Infrastructure have indexed the abstracts of this session. The close cooperation among Jiangsu University, the Chinese Advanced Materials Society and the Society of Molecular Imprinting, along with the International Union of Advanced Materials, has made this session feasible.

It is also very pleasant to recall that the session has been successful in not only scientific context but also social and cultural context. The session site Zhenjiang is well known as the famous humanistic city in east China, which holds a 2500-year's history and has a splendid humanistic environment. The Jinshan Temple, a site originating the white-snake fairy tale, has received tourists as many as more than 400 million in the past decade. Many of tourists have left their tears behind when recalling the memory of the beautiful white-snake story. Some of them have also temporarily written their names in the inner wall of the temple, in order to pay memorable tribute to their gods imagined and to envision a better perspective. Other prominent landscapes in Zhenjiang include Zhaoyin Temple, Jiaoshan Mountain, and Lingquan Spring, which act also as a window for the outside to understand Chinese cultures and history. Thus, the choice of Zhenjiang as the session site, in fact, has played a part in leading to the eventual success of this session.

To commemorate the advanced functional material session, the executive committee has invited Prof. Xinhua Yuan, deputy secretary-general of the Chinese Advanced Materials Society, to serve as the guest editor for this present special issue. I am pleased that he has enthusiastically taken on this task, resulting in publication of the excellent issue. It is satisfying that all papers published in this issue have gone through scientific reviewing and editorial scrutiny. While it has not been possible to publish a comprehensive proceedings volume based on the entire session program, this issue does represent a memorable tribute not only to the lecturers, but also to those who contributed to the overall success of the session.

Finally, with the deepest feeling, I want to express my thanks to ***Key Engineering Materials*** for generous support of the session. I would also like to acknowledge other colleagues who enthusiastically contributed to the success of the session, and in fact to the publication of this special issue. The essence of scientific research is to learn from nature and to solve complicated problems through the inspiration sough from nature. Thus, I hope that the session have helped bring out more secrets of nature and potentially promote them for our future happiness.

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